

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received **SEP 6 1985**

date entered **OCT 3 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1809 First Avenue South NA not for publication

city, town Birmingham NA vicinity of congressional district 6

state Alabama code 01 county Jefferson code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Warehouse</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Frank Lambert--Belknap Corporation

street & number 111 East Main Street

city, town Louisville NA vicinity of state KY 40202

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Birmingham, City Hall

street & number 7th Avenue North

city, town Birmingham, state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse (1908) is a four-story brick building with a wooden sub-structure. The first floor of the facade is marked by a series of doors and window openings, which have been altered, with only a few of the original six-over-six windows intact. A narrow stone and corbeled brick belt course divides the first floor from the three floors directly above. The second, third and fourth floors of the facade are divided into seven recessed rectangular panels of various sizes. Each of these panels is flanked on either side by a narrow brick pilaster. Above the fourth floor is a corbeled brick cornice which spans the entire length of the facade. Incorporated into the cornice design, and placed directly over each of the pilasters, are double corbeled brick chevron patterns.

The interior of the building is utilitarian, with modest details. The floors are open with a single masonry wall dividing the interior. The floors for the second, third and fourth floors are wooden and consist of tongue and groove boarding. Interior alterations include an office area on the second floor and an elevator installed in the 1960s.

A two-story concrete block addition and a two-story metal structure were added to the eastern end of the warehouse in the 1950s. A two-story brick loading dock dates from the late 1930s and is located to the western end of the lot. Neither of these structures contribute.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1908

Builder/Architect William C. Weston

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criterion A - Commerce/Industry:

The Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse is significant for its association with a warehousing district important to the early development of Birmingham. As the city's largest combination wholesale and retail warehouse establishment, the Wimberly-Thomas Hardware Company, Inc. supplied the needs of numerous businesses fundamental to Birmingham's economic growth, including the construction industry, the mining industry, the textile industry, and the railroad industry. The Wimberly-Thomas Hardware Company, Inc. sold merchandise both as retail and wholesale, so workmen and the general public of the era frequented this location. Company records document the day-to-day needs and the patterns of boom and decline of building contractors, the railroads and companies such as U. S. Pipe and Avondale Mills. The company was especially known for its sale of firearms and ammunitions. Sales of such products to security agents patrolling area mines offer insight into the area's labor history. The company since its founding has been a primary source for the hardware retail industry in this area.

By its growth from a location of approximately 30,000 square feet at the turn of the century to this building consisting of 140,000 square feet vividly demonstrates the demand of the time for hardware and construction materials.

Criterion C - Architecture:

The Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse built in 1908 is significant as an excellent example of its type exemplifying the need for large, open, well-lighted storage and distribution space, sighted close to rail transportation. Its utilitarian nature is expressed in a very clean and straightforward design. It is, however, notably distinguished by the subtle articulation of the facade, using paired windows and pilasters to define a central full bay element that steadily diminishes to a single bay on the ends. The design feature and the rather stylized ornamental brickwork reflect the skill of the architect, William C. Weston*, Birmingham's foremost early 20th century architect.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 400' x 140'

Quadrangle name Birmingham North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	1	8	0	0	0	3	7	0	8	6	9	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Blk 123 Lots 1-10

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mertins/Cultural Resource Administrator;
Pamela Sterne King/Linda C. Akenhead, Operation New Birmingham

organization Alabama Historical Commission date April 30, 1985

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone 205-261-3184

city or town Montgomery state AL

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

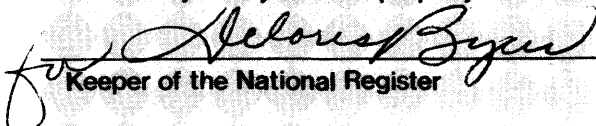
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-16-85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register


Keeper of the National Register

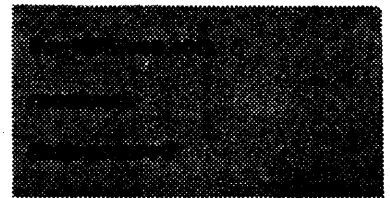
Entered in the National Register date 10-3-85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Historical Development

The Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse, located on 1st Avenue South and 18th Street South, is a part of the Southside neighborhood which developed in conjunction with the downtown Birmingham district.

In the 1880s worker housing grew in the location along with a scattering of light industrial, storage and livery businesses. By the 1890s a commercial district along 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd Streets and 1st, 2nd and 3rd Avenues South began to evolve. Small merchant concerns such as groceries, grain stores, and blacksmith shops were mixed among boarding houses, saloons, and carriage shops. By 1900, the Southside area had changed from a mostly residential district to a commercial and warehouse area.

The (1981) Southside Highland Report calls this district the Warehouse Conservation District since the area is a collection of warehouse and industrial buildings that date from 1900-1940. It is a reminder of the city's early industrialization along the railroad tracks. This area contains the largest concentration of older commercial buildings remaining in the Southside area. A few buildings date from the 1880s and 1890s which make them among the oldest in Birmingham. Most, however, like the Wimberly-Thomas Warehouse, date from 1900 to 1920. Many of the buildings were built as (and still serve as) automobile-related service and sales establishments. Several similar significant buildings were demolished for new structures during the 1950s and 1960s.

The Wimberly-Thomas Hardware Company, Inc. first originated around 1887 as the May and Thomas Hardware Company. Charles Thomas and May opened their retail store on 1st Avenue North with their warehouse located on the back side facing Morris Avenue. T. Felton Wimberly, a bookkeeper with May and Thomas, bought May's interest in the company in 1890. The business outgrew the 1st Avenue North store and Mr. Thomas retained William C. Weston to design a new warehouse which was completed in 1908 and located on Avenue A (1st Avenue South).

After moving into the new warehouse, the company served both the retail and wholesale business of Birmingham. The Hardware Company carried all standard hardware items from nails to buggies to harnesses. It has remained in continual existence as a major hardware distribution center for the region altering its merchandise to keep pace with changing community needs. Today the warehouse distributes all standard hardware material in addition to small modern appliances.

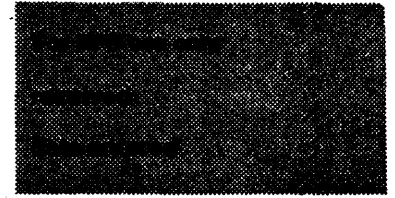
* * * * *

* William C. Weston:

Weston designed a number of Birmingham's buildings. He was associate architect to the Woodward Building (1902; NRHP - 1982) which was the first of the four magnificent corner (1st Avenue North and 20th Street) skyscrapers included in what would be called the "Heaviest Corner on Earth" (NRHP - 1985). In 1906 Weston designed the second of these skyscrapers, the Brown-Marx Building, a 16-story commercial-style structure that was more than doubled by an addition in 1908. Weston-designed skyscrapers include the

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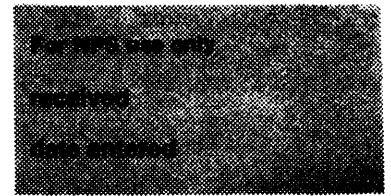
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Title Guaranty Building (1903; DBHD 1982); the Frank Nelson Building (1903; DBHD 1982); a 10-story building which expresses the Chicago style; and the 26-story Jefferson County Savings Bank Building (1913; DBHD 1982), the most dramatic early skyscraper and for more than 50 years the tallest building in the city. This was the last major work by Weston in Birmingham.

In addition to skyscrapers, Weston designed an impressive collection of smaller office buildings in the downtown area as well as housing in the affluent suburb of Forest Park (NRHP - 1980). Among these commercial office buildings were the Age-Herald Building (1910; NRHP - 1984); and the Birmingham Realty Company Building (1905; Morris Avenue, 1st Avenue North H.D.) with its extraordinary interior and distinguished facade. Weston also designed two of the most prominent buildings in the Five Points South Historic District: The Terrace Court Apartments (1907), a six-story Beaux Arts-style apartment house which was one of the finest skyscraper apartments in the southeast; and the Temple Emanu-El (1914), one of the city's finest examples of classical architecture.

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Birmingham News, 3 April 1890

Birmingham City License 1897-1925
From Wimberly-Thomas Company Records

Birmingham Public Library Archives
Hill Ferguson Collection Vol. 2
Architects File

Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, by Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn
Withey.
New Age Publishing Company, Los Angeles, California, 1956

Southside-Highland Survey Report, Birmingham Historical Society, 1981.

White, Marjorie, Downtown Birmingham: Architectural and Historical Walking Tour Guide,
1980.

Telephone Interview with Gene Skiles, 2-11-85.

Telephone Interview with Bill Mayner, 4-16-85.

Telephone Interview with Andrew Shackelford, 4-12-85.

Oral Interview with Sam Hitt, 4-16-85.

Telephone Interview with Mrs. Farr, 4-17-85.

Letter from Wimberly-Thomas to Hawkins Lumber Company, 6-28-1908.

Wimberly-Thomas Office Records.

B

A

B

A

112 Powell

112

113

113

G

H

G

G

S.A.L. FREIGHT

FIRST

Wimberly-Thoma

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

125

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

124

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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123

8	7	6	5	4		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17

122

SECOND

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

132

RES. B-A

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

133

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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134

8	7	6	5	4		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17

135

THIRD

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

151

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

150

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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149

8	7	6	5		
11	12	13	14	15	16

148

FOURTH

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

158

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

159

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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160

8	7	6	5		
11	12	13	14	15	16

161

FIFTH

BHAM

RETT

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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176

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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175

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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175

10	9	8	7	6
11	12			

177

17TH

18TH

19TH

STREET

STREET

STREET